

Fall 2021

PSC 369: Social Movements and U.S. Politics

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Class time: Tuesday/Thursday 2:00-3:15pm
Classroom: TH 117
Office Hours: T/R 11:00am-12pm and by app't

I. Course Summary:

In this course we will examine the causes and consequences of social movements in U.S. politics. Although social scientists have defined “social movements” in somewhat different ways, we will rely on a relatively simple definition that reflects the shared elements of all of the definitions found in the literature. Social movements are collective, organized efforts of non-state actors to promote or resist change, that rely in whole or in part on unconventional political tactics. Throughout U.S. history, it is difficult to identify major examples of policy change that were not spurred by social movement activity. Indeed, the wave of protests that swept the country in the aftermath of George Floyd’s murder by Minneapolis police officers attest to the fact that social movements continue to play an important role in our politics today. Yet, social movements remain the least studied form of political influence within the discipline of political science. Therefore, much of the material from this course will draw from the fields of political sociology and history, where the majority of the research on social movements can be found. Although we will examine a broad range of social movements to illustrate the concepts and theories introduced in this class, due to the centrality of race in American politics we will spend a considerable amount of time studying the various movements for racial justice and the counter-movements that they spawned over the last 50 years.

Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Differentiate between social movements and other forms of collective action.
- Compare and contrast the major theories of social movement formation.
- Understand the full range of strategies and tactics used by social movements.
- Compare and contrast the major theories of social movement outcomes, including theories of social movement decline, diffusion, counter-movements, and state response.
- Apply the theories and concepts studied in this course to real examples of social movements in U.S. politics.

II. Required Textbooks

1. Paul Almeida. *Social Movements: The Structure of Collective Mobilization*. University of California Press.
2. Doug McAdam. *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*, 2nd Edition. University of Chicago Press.
3. Suzanne Staggenborg, *Social Movements*. 2nd Edition, Oxford University Press.
4. Journal articles/book chapters assigned by the instructor.

III. Course Requirements***Reading***

In addition to the required texts, the reading for this course consists of academic journal articles, excerpts from important books, and the speeches and writings of social movement leaders. Most of the

readings for this course are not specifically written for an undergraduate class, but rather are intended for both students and academics alike. Although I have made an effort to include readings that are accessible to a wide audience, it is quite likely that some of you will find this reading to be a bit more challenging than what you are used to. In addition, for some weeks the amount of reading is substantial.

Consequently, it is imperative that you set aside an appropriate amount of time to carefully read (and in some cases re-read) the material. For the weeks where the assigned reading is somewhat heavier than usual, I will give you some guidance as to which sections should be read carefully, and which sections might be skimmed. Nevertheless, my expectation is that you take this course seriously and invest the necessary time to read all of the material.

Class Preparation:

It is essential that you complete the assigned reading before the corresponding lectures. This is true for two reasons. First, my lectures and our classroom activities often assume some familiarity with the readings. Second, given the amount of reading it will be in your interest not to get behind. Trying to cram a couple of days before the exams will not work for this course, I assure you. To help you keep up with the reading, I will incentivize and assess your preparation through 8 online quizzes on the readings that will be due prior to class on the dates indicated on the syllabus. These quizzes will be completed on Blackboard (**10% of final grade**).

Exams

There will be two exams – a midterm exam (**25% of final grade**) and a final exam (**30% of final grade**). The exams will be in-class exams and consist of short answer and multiple-choice questions.

Research Report

You will be required to write a research report (at least 2000 words) on a social movement organization that is or was aligned with a U.S. social movement. The final due date for the report is November 23rd and will be worth **20% of your final grade**.

Class Participation:

In addition to voluntary discussion in class, I have built into the course some structured class participation activities that will contribute to your final grade.

- You are invited to contribute to the class by participating in a feature of the course that I call “social movements in the news.” To participate, do the following: (1) Find a news story about a contemporary social movement. (2) In approximately 150-200 words, you should describe how the story illustrates a key concept, theory or theme from the course. You should post a link to the news story, as well as your commentary, on Blackboard for the entire class to read. This feature of the course is not required. However, you will receive one point for every post that follows these guidelines, for a maximum of 3 participation points. We will discuss your posts in class, when appropriate and as time permits (**up to 3% of final grade as extra credit**).
- You may volunteer to answer occasional discussion questions in the form of a short essay and discuss your answer in class (**1 % point for each question answered, up to 3% of final grade as extra credit**).

Protest and Popular Culture

You are required to identify and analyze a “protest song” that is relevant to a specific social movement. There are many lists of protest songs available on the internet, including this list of the “[100 Greatest Protest Songs](#)”. The assignment will consist of three components:

- (a) Identify the song and songwriter/performer (please provide the lyrics in an appendix).
- (b) Identify the specific social movement that the song is intended to promote.
- (c) In approximately 2 pages of double-spaced text, analyze the meaning of the song and how and why it is relevant to the social movement. How does the song attempt to instill “political consciousness” among its listeners, and thus attempt to promote participation in the movement?

This assignment is due NO LATER THAN November 12th. Students will briefly share their songs and a brief summary of their analysis during the final week of class. Please turn in the assignment through Blackboard. (**15% of final grade**).

Grading:

Reading Quizzes	10%
Midterm Exam	25%
Final Exam	30%
Research Report	20%
Protest Song Analysis	15%

Calculation of Grade:

A+	97-100	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69	F	<59
A	93-96	B	83-86	C	73-76	D	63-66		
A-	90-92	B-	80-82	C-	70-72	D-	60-62		

IV. Course Policies

Classroom Decorum. The Code of Student Conduct requires that students behave in a manner that is conducive to a teaching/learning environment. Students who engage in behavior that is disruptive or obstructive to the teaching/learning environment will be subject to disciplinary sanctions outlined by the Code of Student Conduct. Disruptive/obstructive behavior certainly includes the following: physical abuse, verbal abuse, threats, stalking, intimidation harassment, hazing, possession of controlled substances, and possession of alcoholic beverages. For the purposes of this class, such behaviors will also include talking to another student when course material is being presented in class, the use of cell phones in any way, the use of laptop computers (or any other electronic device) for anything other than taking notes for this class, and reading the newspaper or any other periodical or book that is not assigned for this class.

Excused Absences and Late/Missed Work. Students will be excused from late assignments and will be allowed to make up missed exams when (1) the student has promptly notified the instructor of the missed work, and (2) the student has an acceptable excuse. An acceptable excuse is defined as any event or circumstance that prevents the student from attending class or completing an assignment and which is beyond the reasonable control of the student. Examples of such events include major illnesses, serious illness or death of an immediate family member, travel required for officially recognized University organizations, and other reasons as determined by the instructor on a case by case basis. Without exception, documentation must be provided to the instructor for an excuse to be deemed acceptable.

Academic Misconduct. All students in attendance at the University of Alabama are expected to be honorable and to observe standards of conduct appropriate to a community of scholars. The University expects from its students a higher standard of conduct than the minimum required to avoid discipline. Academic misconduct includes all acts of dishonesty in any academically related matter and any knowing or intentional help or attempt to help, or conspiracy to help, another student.

[The Academic Misconduct Disciplinary Policy](#) will be followed in the event of academic misconduct.

Use of Plagiarism Detection Software. The University of Alabama is committed to helping students to uphold the ethical standards of academic integrity in all areas of study. Students agree that their enrollment in this course allows the instructor the right to use electronic devices to help prevent plagiarism. All course materials are subject to submission to Turnitin.com and will be included as source documents in Turnitin.com's restricted access database for the purpose of detecting textual similarities. Turnitin.com will be used as a tool to help students avoid plagiarism in written documents.

Disability Statement. If you are registered with the Office of Disability Services, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss any course accommodations that may be necessary. If you have a disability, but have not contacted the Office of Disability Services, please call 348-4285 or visit 133-B Martha Parham Hall East to register for services. Students with disabilities must be registered with the Office of Disability Services, 133-B Martha Parham Hall East, before receiving academic adjustments.

Severe Weather Protocol. Students should go to the main University of Alabama website, www.ua.edu, for general information in case of an emergency. Following an emergency/disaster, the instructor will

communicate any emergency information concerning the course within Blackboard.

Civility Statement. The University of Alabama is committed to an ethical, inclusive community defined by respect and civility. The UAct website (www.ua.edu/uact) provides extensive information on how to report or obtain assistance with a variety of issues, including issues related to dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, sexual assault, sexual violence or other Title IX violations, illegal discrimination, harassment, hate or bias incidents, child abuse or neglect, hazing, threat assessment, retaliation, and ethical violations or fraud.

V. Statement on COVID-19

All University faculty, staff, and students are expected to maintain a commitment to the health and safety of our campus community. Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, specific health and safety standards are in place to minimize exposure and community spread on campus. In the interest of your health and safety and that of all UA students, faculty and staff, the University reserves the right to change the mode of instruction or schedule of instruction at any time, based upon prevailing public health and other guidance. While the method of delivery may change, educational instruction and opportunities will continue. As such, the University will not provide a refund of tuition, in whole or in-part, based on any such changes. Detailed information on changes in format or schedule can be found at studentaccounts.ua.edu and financialaid.ua.edu.

All students must be familiar with and abide by the requirements outlined in the UA Return Plan | UA System Comprehensive Health and Safety Plan. Students must (1) wear a mask or face covering at all times while participating in face-to-face class; (2) adhere to social distancing standards; and (3) comply with all other health and safety restrictions. If a student refuses to comply with the requirements, the student will be asked to leave the class and reported for a conduct violation. Unless a student has an exemption from the requirement to wear a face covering, (more information can be found at ods.ua.edu/covid-19-disability/), the student will be reported to Student Life for further disciplinary action. More information on these requirements and UA Healthcheck system and screening can be found at healthinfo.ua.edu/returnplan. You are expected to visit the site and comply with all noted requirements related to in-person class attendance.

VI. Course Schedule (version 11/16/2021)

The course schedule is subject to change, especially for the later weeks of the course. I will always post an announcement to the class if I revise the course schedule in any way. All reading quizzes must be completed prior to class on the due date unless otherwise stated.

CLASS DATES	TOPIC	READING / COURSE MATERIAL
August 19/24	Introduction to Course <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are Social Movements? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Almeida – Chapter 1 Staggenborg – Chapter 1
August 26/31	Theories of Social Movement Formation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psychological explanations Resource Mobilization Theory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> McAdam – Chapters 1-2 Almeida – Chapter 3 (pp. 44-49) Staggenborg – Chapter 2 (pp. 14-21)
September 2	Theories of Social Movement Formation (cont'd) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Political Process Model <p>Reading Quiz #1 (Due: 9/2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> McAdam – Chapter 3 Almeida – Chapter 3 (remainder) Staggenborg – Chapter 2 (remainder)
September 7/9	Social Movement Emergence: When and Where Do Movements Start? Who participates?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Almeida – Chapter 4, 6 Staggenborg (Chapter 3, pp. 31-38)
September 14/16	Case Study: The Emergence of the Civil Rights Movement <p>Reading Quiz #2 (Due 9/16)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> McAdam – Chapter 5 <i>Eyes on the Prize</i> (Awakenings)
September 21/23	Social Movement Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Framing Media and Communication <p>Reading Quiz #3 (Due 9/23)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Almeida – Chapter 5 Staggenborg (Chapter 3, pp. 51-55)
September 28	Social Movement Tactics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Civil Disobedience Nonviolent Resistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Henry David Thoreau, “Resistance to Civil Government,” 1849. Martin Luther King, Jr. “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” 1963. TBA
September 30	Midterm Exam (Details TBA) (NO CLASS)	
October 5/7	Case Study of Protest Tactics and Diffusion: The Civil Rights Movement <p>Reading Quiz #4 (Due 10/7)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> McAdam – Chapters 6-7 <i>Eyes on the Prize</i> (TBA)
October 12/14	Social Movement Outcomes: Theories of Government Response <p>Reading Quiz #5: (Due 10/14)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Almeida – Chapter 7 TBA
October 19/21	Social Movement Outcomes: Spinoff Effects and The Protest Cycle of the 1960s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staggenborg – Chapter 4 The Weather Underground (Documentary)
October 26	Case Study: The Women’s Movement <p>Reading Quiz #6: (Due 10/26)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staggenborg – Chapter 5

October 28	FALL BREAK	
November 2/4	Case Studies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LGBT Movement • The Environmental Movement <p>Reading Quiz #7: (Due 11/04)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staggenborg – Chapters 6-7
November 9/11	Social Movement Outcomes: American Right-Wing Movements as Counter-movements <p>Protest Song Analysis Paper Due November 12th (11:59pm)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meyer and Staggenborg. 1996. “Movements, Countermovements, and the Structure of Political Opportunity.” <i>American Journal of Sociology</i>. • Staggenborg – Chapter 8
November 16/18	Case Study: The White Nationalist Movement: From Fringe to Mainstream <p>Reading Quiz #8: (Rescheduled – Now Due 11/23)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fording and Schram. 2020. “The Rise of the Modern White Nationalist Movement.” Chapters 3 and 4 of <i>Hard White: The Mainstreaming of Racism in American Politics</i>.
November 23	Case Studies of Contemporary Social Movements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occupy Wall Street • The Black Lives Matter Movement and the George Floyd Protests • The Resistance <p>Research Report Due: November 23 (11:59pm)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clayton, D.M., 2018. “Black lives matter and the civil rights movement: A comparative analysis of two social movements in the United States.” <i>Journal of Black Studies</i>, 49(5), pp.448-480. • Meyer, David S., and Sidney Tarrow, eds. The Resistance: The Dawn of the Anti-Trump Opposition Movement. Oxford University Press, 2018. (Read the Introduction, pages 1-21).
November 25	Thanksgiving Break	
November 30 December 2	Protest Song Analysis – Student Presentations	
December 6	Final Exam Distributed	
December 10	Final Exam Due (11:59pm)	